

DOCUMENT NO. 1  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. [ ]  
IT: DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS: CHANGED TO: TS S  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1-14-80  
AUTH: HR 70-8  
DATE: 1-14-80  
REVIEWER: 372044

**NSC BRIEFING**

**4 September 1956**

**THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS**

- I. The Chinese Communist Party's 8th Congress, its first since 1945, is scheduled to open in Peiping on 15 September. The Congress is expected to start the party in the direction of "collective leadership," although Mao Tse-tung, who has personally led the party since 1935, will almost certainly continue to be the dominant figure.
- II. There are four principal items on the Congress' agenda:
  - A. The report of the Central Committee--on its work since 1945.
  - B. A report on revision of the Party Constitution.
  - C. A directive on the Second Five-Year Plan--for the period 1953-62.
  - D. Election of a new Central Committee.
- III. The last CCP Congress (1945), like Soviet party congresses since the 1920's, was a rubber-stamp for the party leadership, enthusiastically approving its policies and electing its choices to the Central Committee. This is expected to be essentially the case again, although there will be an appearance of earnest discussion and a mild show of "criticism and self-criticism."
- IV. The Chinese may follow Soviet practice in making the Central Committee report the main address, with an elaborate review of the world situation, China's internal position, and the condition of the party. If so, Mao or Mao's choice as second-ranking leader will probably make the report. Alternatively, Peiping may break the report into several components, with several members of the "collective

~~SECRET~~

-2-

leadership" reporting. Either way, the principal points are expected to be:

- A. That the Bloc is growing stronger and the West weaker, and that the Bloc, while able to win any war, will continue to seek negotiated settlements of outstanding problems.
- B. That China remains on the "high tide of socialist revolution," and that this can be substantially completed in three years or less.
- C. The party is stronger and more united around its leadership than ever before, and the leadership is faithful to Leninism as opposed to one-man rule (although we do not expect the Chinese to begin to denounce Stalin in terms as strong as the Russians have used).

V

22. The report on revision of the party Constitution will probably be given by Mao's principal spokesman for party affairs since 1945, Liu Shao-chi, or by a deputy of Liu's. The revisions will probably bring the Constitution into closer conformity with the Soviet statutes adopted in 1932.

- A. A new Constitution may reduce the number of posts held by the head of the party. Mao is now Chairman of the Central Committee, Politburo and Secretariat (which directs daily operations). Elimination of one or more of these posts would present a greater appearance of collective leadership and would in fact take a step toward such a collective.

VI. The Second Five-Year Plan in many respects will be Peiping's first coordinated long-term plan. It will almost certainly emphasize

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-3-

heavy industry and envisage a great increase in agricultural output.

- A. Peiping has announced a 1962 goal of 14 million tons of steel (five times the 1955 claim). The Chinese are expected to try to double the coal output (93 million tons in 1955), and nearly to double grain output (184 million tons in 1955).
  - B. The goal for grain output in particular seems unrealistic, although the grain increase will probably keep up with the expected population growth of almost two percent annually.
- VII. The composition of the new membership of the Central Committee will be significant because it will have been decided on beforehand by the party's top leaders and thus may reflect their comparative strengths.

- A. The high levels of the party and government in recent years have clearly represented Mao Tse-tung's own team. The Central Committee elections, like the proceedings of the Congress as a whole, will reflect Mao's predominance and throw further light on his preferences as to his heirs.
- B. However, it is by no means assured that Mao's arrangements will survive him; some of his lieutenants may well have plans of their own. Many of them have acquired proteges of their own, and their success in installing personal followers in key parts of the party structure may have a profound effect on the post-Mao leadership.
- C. Mao's two most powerful lieutenants have long seemed to be Lin Biao-chi and Chou En-lai. Other centers of power seem

~~SECRET~~

-4-

Peng Te-huai, the fast-rising defense minister; Peng Chen, mayor and party boss of Peiping; and Kang Sheng, long reported as the party's secret police chief. There are several other figures who would be great assets to any contender for power but who do not appear to be centers of power themselves.

- D. In the elections to the Central Committee, and in subsequent appointments to the key organs (Politburo, Secretariat, and central departments such as organization and party police), we expect Liu, Chen and Peng Te-huai to strengthen their positions considerably, and Peng Chen and Kang Sheng to make gains.
- E. We are particularly interested in getting evidence as to whether either Liu or Chen is forging ahead of the other. They have long been reported as hostile, and there have been fragmentary indications that they have been competing for power in the government structure (in which they hold the two top jobs). It will probably be some weeks before we can reach any view on this question.

**CONFIDENTIAL**